

LEAVENWORTH COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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On Tuesday, March 17th the Leavenworth County Health Department Local Health Officer issued an Emergency Public Health order to mitigate the spread of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) epidemic in Leavenworth County. The order specifically addressed:

1. All large gatherings of more than 10 people are prohibited.
2. All restaurants, dining facilities, bars, taverns, clubs and movie theatres in Leavenworth County are ordered to close effective at 12:01 on March 18th until midnight on April 1, 2020 with exceptions limited to carryout, drive-through and delivery or where the establishment can maintain 10 or less persons with the proper social distancing of 6' or more.

These restrictions have been implemented to help slow the spread of this disease. The restriction to fewer than 10 people in a public space combined with the maintenance of social distancing and volunteer isolation are steps that will slow the spread of this disease. Local Health Officer Jamie Miller stated "We need people to take these precautions seriously and adhere to these actions and recommendations. These restrictions will only be successful if we all work together."

As reported by www.kansas.com, Dana Hawkinson, Medical Director of Infection Prevention and Control at the University of Kansas Health Systems, reported "The Kansas City metro area's Coronavirus (COVID-19) could be as severe as Seattle, Washington within two weeks." Dr. Hawkinson continued by stating "This isn't a maybe. It is coming," As of Thursday, March 19th Seattle reports 1,187 positive cases and 66 deaths. In the State of Kansas, there has been 34 documented positive test results with the Kansas City metro area experiencing 27 of the cases and 1 death.

Dr. Kathleen McBratney is the Medical Director for Leavenworth County Health Department and a local physician. Dr. McBratney stated her practice is seeing a large volume of patients with the signs and symptoms resembling COVID-19. Due to the increased volume of patients her practice has implemented a drive-through clinic in the parking lot. "By doing this we are lessening the exposure to our staff and other patients we are seeing in the medical office who are not experiencing symptoms related to COVID-19." Dr. McBratney referenced the spread of COVID-19 in Italy. Italy has experienced over 35,000 confirmed cases of COVID 19 with a total of 2978 deaths, 475 of those deaths occurred one day ago.

Dr. McBratney stated, the restrictions and recommendations imposed by the Leavenworth County Department of Health, Kansas Department of Health and Environment and the United States government are meant to slow the spread of this disease. The goal is to reduce the spread of this disease from suffering to potential fatalities we are seeing in other countries. "We have not even seen the tip of the iceberg at this point and people need to take these

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restrictions and recommendations seriously.” Dr. McBratney continued by stating “My husband and I are sleeping in separate bedrooms and are distancing ourselves within our own home. As a physician, I am worried for the health of my patients, my staff and my family.”

Local Health Officer Jamie Miller expressed his concern with the increase of positive patients, “we are going to see a demand placed on our health systems many of these systems were already operating close to or at capacity. People are highly encouraged to do their part in reducing the spread of this disease.” Along with the restrictions stated in the Local Public Health Order, people are advised to do the following:

- During the time period of the Local Public Health Emergency Order stay home and self-isolate. Don’t go anywhere unless it’s absolutely necessary. If you need to shop take advantage of the curbside services offered by many retail stores.
- Those feeling ill should stay home to protect others in the community.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Don’t shake hands with people.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- It’s important to create an appropriate social distance from others of at least 6 feet. This doesn’t mean to socially disconnect, stay in contact with people using the various forms of social media, visit with neighbors on nice days in the driveway maintaining the social distance, and find other ways to remain connected while at a safe distance.

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